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**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 809 with Amendments  
Education – Public School Employees – Parental Leave**

**Senate Finance Committee  
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**Christian Gobel  
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 809 with amendments. Under Senate Bill 809, certain public school employees may be entitled to parental leave with pay for the birth of the employee's child or the placement of a child under the age of six with the employee for adoption. MSEA applauds Senator Washington for introducing legislation to expand paid parental leave for educators.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA supports legislative efforts to raise labor standards for educators and school employees and paid leave is a crucial element to improve educators and school employees working conditions. Paid parental leave not only allows a primary caregiver to spend essential time with their child during an important developmental period of time for the child and the caregiver, but also serves as a critical tool to retain and recruit individuals for the education workforce.

MSEA supports Senate Bill 809 with amendments to ensure the legislation benefits more school employees, works in conjunction with the Time to Care Act and existing leave benefits, and preserves the ability of exclusive representatives to bargain with their employers over paid parental leave.



Specifically, MSEA seeks legislative amendments that address the following topics.

- Expand paid parental leave to certificated and non-certificated school employees.
- Ensure the paid parental leave offered in SB 809 works in conjunction with, and does not replace, paid leave offered under the Time to Care Act of 2022.
- Preclude an employer from requiring an employee to exhaust other forms of accrued leave to utilize paid parental leave.
- Preserve the ability of an exclusive representative to bargain with their employer on implementation of paid parental leave and benefits that may be negotiated beyond what is offered in statute.

MSEA believes these amendments are necessary to ensure an equitable implementation of paid parental leave for school employees, while allowing employees through their exclusive representatives to maintain a voice in their working conditions.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 809 with amendments.